Investigation of companies involved in oil for food scam

3229. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether investigations have been carried out by Income Tax department and Enforcement Directorate into the accounts of all the 125 companies named in the report of the United Nations Independent Inquiry Committee (Volcker Committee) for their involvement in evasion of income tax and payment of kickbacks to former Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq as assured by him at the Annual Economic Editors Conference in November, 2005;

(b) if so, the salient findings thereof; and

(c) the details of action initiated by the respective departments in the light of their probes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) The Income Tax authorities concerned have been directed to verify the transactions of the companies named in the report of the United Nations Independent Inquiry Committee (Volcker Committee) on the oil-for-food programme of Iraq. In one of the cases, enquiries have led to a search and seizure action under Section 132 of the Income Tax Act, 1961. No other instance of tax evasion has been reported till date.

The Enforcement Directorate is also examining the matter for possible contravention of the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, if any.

Introduction of charges for Services by SBI

3230. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether State Bank of India has recently re-determined/ introduced charges for various services they are offering to their clients like making of drafts, withdrawals, etc.;

(b) the details of the services for which the clients are charged by the SBI and the rates therefor;